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FRANCE

France is ready to equip one of its three operational ballistic missile submarines with the country's first megaton thermonuclear warhead, Defense Minister Bourges announced on Tuesday.

[REDACTED] Bourges told newsmen that France's other operational missile submarines will have the new warhead by the end of the year.

The Redoutable, which has just re-entered service after completing a 15-month overhaul, probably will be the first to receive the warhead. The Redoutable, whose 16 missiles now have 450-kiloton warheads, had been scheduled to carry some of the new 1-megaton warheads when it re-entered service. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] In any case, it is unlikely that any submarine will have a full load of the warheads before the end of this year. [REDACTED]

